

Message Text

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S E C R E T DAMASCUS 2552

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, SY, IS, XF

SUBJ: KHADDAM'S SPECIAL ADVISOR HINTS AT SYRIAN COOLNESS

TOWARDS CAMPAIGN EXPEL ISRAEL FROM UN

REF: DAMASCUS 2543

1. ITALIAN AMB BUCCI HAS INFORMED ME OF FOLLOWING CONVERSATION HE HAD JULY 5 WITH KHADDAM'S SPECIAL ADVISOR AT FONMINISTRY, TARAZI, WHICH INCLUDED DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE CAMPAIGN TO EXPEL ISRAEL FROM UN. BUCCI HAD VOLUNTEERED THAT IN HIS PERSONAL OPINION THIS MOVE WOULD BE GRAVE ERROR FOR ARABS, CITING NEED KEEP ISRAEL IN UN IN ORDER TO HOLD IT TO ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER RESES 242 AND 338. HE ACKNOWLEDGED PROBABILITY THAT ARABS COULD MUSTER SUFFICIENT THIRD WORLD VOTES FOR EXPULSION BUT, HE CONTINUED, EC-9 WOULD BE IN OPPOSITION AS WELL AS USG AND SEVERAL OTHER STATES WHICH SYRIANS AND OTHER ARABS SHOULD THINK TWICE ABOUT ANTAGONIZING AT THIS JUNCTURE. PREDICTED MOVE WOULD IRRITATE AS WELL EGYPT AND JORDAN. LATTER WOULD NOT APPRECIATE WHAT IT WOULD INTERPRET AS EFFORT AGAIN ADVANCE

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PLO INTERESTS, AND IN PARTICULAR THOSE OF ITS EXTREMIST

WING, AT EXPENSE OF THOSE OF GOJ. (BUCCI FELT THIS POINT PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED TARAZI.)

2. IN REPLY TARAZI STATED THAT AS OF LATE 1974 SYRIAN PUSH FOR ISRAELI EXPULSION FROM UNGA. NOTED, "SITUATION TODAY IS NOT SO CLEAR." WHILE HE AVOIDED DEFINING SYRIA'S LATEST THINKING ON SUCH CAMPAIGN, TARAZI DID EMPHASIZE THAT SYRIA'S DECISION WOULD BE GUIDED SOLELY BY ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS. TARAZI CONCLUDED, " I BELIEVE ON THIS ISSUE WE WILL BE GUIDED BY OUR MINDS AND NOT BY OUR HEARTS."

3. COMMENT: TARAZI'S COMMENTS SUGGEST THAT SYRIA HAS COOLED WOMEWHAT ON THE IDEA OF EXPELLING ISRAEL. TARAZI IS ONE OF THE FEW FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS AT LEAST OCCASIONALLY CUT IN ON THE DIRECTION OF ASAD'S AND KHADDAM'S THINKING. (REFTEL REPORTED HOW HE HAD REMAINED SILENT WHEN SUBJECT OF ISRAEL'S EXPULSION WAS DEBATED IN HIS PRESENCE LAST WEEK BY ONE OF HIS JUNIOR FONMINISTRY COLLEAGUES WITH FORMER AMBASSADOR YOST.)

4. DESPITE TARAZI'S DESCRIPTION, SYRIA'S PUBLIC POSTURE URGING EXPULSION LASTED WELL INTO 1975. KHADDAM VOCIFEROUSLY ARGUED FOR THIS ACTION IN MARCH AT THE HAVANA NON-ALIGNED PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. TO SHIFT GEARS NOW MAY BE AWKWARD BUT NOT FORTUNATELY, BEYOND THE SKILLS OF THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP. IF SYRIANS HAVE DETERMINED TO DROP THIS CAMPAIGN, ONE FACTOR IN THEIR DECISION WILL SURELY HAVE BEEN THEIR JUDGMENT OF THE DAMAGE CAMPAIGN WOULD DO TO SYRIAN-US RELATIONS. HOWEVER DISSATISFIED THE SYRIANS PROFESS TO BE WITH THE PACE OF OUR ME DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, I BELIVE ASAD AND KHADDAM ARE CONVINCED OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF US INTENTIONS AND EFFORTS TO CONTINUE TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE AND DO NOT WISH TO JEOPARDIZE THESE EFFORTS. QUESTION REMAINS, HOWEVER, WHETHER SARG, WHICH HAS BEEN SO INSTRUMENTAL IN LETTING THIS GENIE OUT OF THE BOTTLE, WILL BE READY TO BLOCK OR EVEN COUNSEL AGAINST A POSSIBLE PLO ATTEMPT AT JIDDA, OR LATER AT LIMA, TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR EXPULSION CAMPAIGN.
MURPHY

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